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REMARKS

The Applicant first thanks the Examiner for indicating claims 10-21 are allowable. The Applicant's counsel next thanks the Examiner for clarifying the Office Action dated August 22, 2006 in a teleconference on October 23, 2006. In that teleconference, the Examiner confirmed that allowable subject matter also was contained in claims 6 and 7.

Entry of the above amendments is now respectfully requested. Claims 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, and 16 have been amended. Claims 5 and 6 have been canceled (claim 4 was previously canceled). New claims 22 and 23 have been added. Thus, claims 1-3 and 7-23 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow.

1. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. However, it is believed that the amendment to claim 11 has resolved this issue.

2. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

A. Claims 1-3, 5, and 9

In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of Yonechara, U.S. Patent No. 5,309,593 (the '593 patent) in view of Biechert et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,483,718 (the '718 patent).

These claims are amended either directly or indirectly and thus are now allowable.

B. Claim 8

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the '593 patent and the '718 patent and further in view of Tono, U.S. Patent No. 5,950,270 (the '270 patent).

This claim is amended and now depends on allowable claim 3. Thus, it is also allowable.

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3. New Claims 22 and 23.

New claims 22 and 23 have been added and depend on now allowable claim 1. Thus, these claims are also allowable.

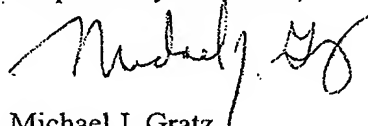
CONCLUSION

It is submitted that claims 1-3 and 7-23 are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 103 and each defines patentable subject matter. A Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested.

No fees are believed to be payable with this communication. Nevertheless, should the Examiner consider any other fees to be payable in conjunction with this or any future communication, the director is authorized to charge any fee or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1170.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it would help expedite the prosecution and allowance of this application.

Respectively submitted,



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